

CDBG Advisory Board
MINUTES
April 6, 2011

Board Members Present: Barbara Bielawski, Sam Fuller, Carole LaVigne, Stephanie Seguino, Jason L'Ecuyer, Fran Cohen, Monica Weeber, Jane Helmstetter, Max Tracy, Don Dickson, Abby Russell, Gretchen Bailey

Others Present: Gary De Carolis (facilitator), Margaret Bozik and Denise Girard (CEDO staff)

The meeting opened at 6:00 p.m. with a welcome and introductions. The minutes from the previous meeting were approved without change. There were no public comments. There is still no information available on what amount of funding will be available to city for the program year beginning July 1, 2011. The Board is proceeding on an assumption of a 10% cut to last year's funding amount.

The Board had in front of it the composite ratings and the respective rankings of all Public Service applications, the median funding amount from individual Board member's allocations, the amount a project received last year, and colored dots representing each Board member's allocation for each application as follows:

- Blue Dot: 75-100% of the amount requested
- Green Dot: 50-75% of the amount requested
- Yellow Dot: 25-50% of the amount requested
- Red Dot: 0-25% of the amount requested

The Board reviewed the basic process for making allocation decisions, which is to use the median funding amount as a starting point, to test for consensus and discuss, and then to vote with Board members rotating to propose a new amount if a majority does not support the previous amount. The Board also unanimously decided on a set of "budget-balancing rules" as follows:

1. Look first at applications with multiple red dots and vote yes/no whether to eliminate those applications
2. Don't revisit the applications eliminated in step 1
3. Review the remaining applications in order from highest ranked to lowest ranked
4. If the budget isn't balanced after steps 1-3, revisit close votes
5. If the budget isn't balanced after step 4, review again starting with the lowest ranked applications
6. If the budget still isn't balanced after step 5, review any projects funded at an amount greater than last year

Reviewing applications with multiple (more than two) red dots, the Board voted unanimously to eliminate DEV2, DEV13, NG1, NG7 and NG10 from further consideration. By votes of 8-4, 8-4, 8-4 and 10-2, respectively, the Board decided to

eliminate DEV12, NG2, NG9 and NG4 from further consideration. The Board voted 3-9 against eliminating NG3 at this time.

The Board then began reviewing applications from the highest ranked down. There was no consensus for the median funding amount of \$88,000 for DEV3, so the Board voted 8-4 for a preliminary recommendation of \$90,300.

On DEV4, there was no consensus on the median amount of \$75,000. A proposal of \$85,000 was rejected on a vote of 6-6. A proposal of \$100,000 was approved by a vote of 8-4.

There was no consensus on the median amount of \$22,500 for DEV5. A proposal of \$35,000 was approved by a vote of 10-2.

There was no consensus on the median amount of \$132,390 for DEV9. A proposal of \$140,000 was approved by a vote of 11-1.

The median amount of \$30,000 for DEV11 was unanimously approved.

There was no consensus on the median amount of \$100,000 for DEV7. A proposal of \$108,500 was approved by a vote of 8-4.

There was no consensus on the median amount of \$48,000 for DEV14. A proposal of \$45,000 was rejected by a vote of 2-10. A proposal of \$50,300 was approved by a vote of 11-1.

There was no consensus on the median amount of \$7,000 for DEV6. A proposal of \$9,500 was approved by a vote of 9-3.

By a vote of 4-8, the median amount of \$7,000 for DEV10 was rejected. A proposal of \$9,000 was approved by a vote of 10-2.

There was no consensus on the median amount of \$12,600 for DEV8. A proposal of \$16,000 was approved by a vote of 7-5.

There was no consensus on the median amount of \$604 for NG8. A proposal of \$605 was approved by a vote of 10-2.

The median amount of \$138 for NG6 was approved by a vote of 10-2.

There was no consensus on the median amount of \$3,725 for NG5. A proposal of \$4,000 was approved by a vote of 8-4.

A proposal of \$2,500 for NG3 was rejected by a vote of 2-10. A proposal of \$4,000 was approved 9-3.

At this point, all applications had been reviewed and the preliminary funding total was \$613,343 - or \$48,901 over the assumed available amount of \$564,442. The Board then revisited those applications where there had been a close vote.

A proposal to reduce DEV1 to \$10,000 was rejected by a vote of 4-8. A proposal of \$14,000 was approved by a vote of 8-4.

A proposal to reduce DEV8 to \$0 was rejected by a vote of 2-10. A proposal of \$12,000 was approved by a vote of 10-2.

A proposal to reduce DEV3 to \$80,000 was rejected by a vote of 3-9. A proposal of \$88,000 was approved by a vote of 9-3.

A proposal to reduce DEV4 to \$95,000 was rejected by a vote of 2-10. A proposal of \$75,000 was approved by a vote of 9-3.

A proposal to reduce DEV7 to \$100,000 was approved by a vote of 11-1.

The Board then considered those applications which would be receiving an increase over last year's funding and which had not already been revisited. A proposal to reduce DEV14 to \$50,199 was approved by a vote of 7-5. A proposal to reduce DEV10 to \$8,000 was approved by a vote of 9-3. A proposal to reduce DEV9 to \$136,000 was approved by a vote of 10-2.

At this point, the Development budget was balanced, assuming \$564,442 in available funds. The Board decided to wait to see if a final funding number becomes available, and to revisit its recommendations at that time (hopefully, by the next scheduled Board meeting).

The Board reviewed its assignment for the next meeting, which is to complete the evaluation form and to think about the following questions:

- o How much did you use the rating criteria in evaluating the applications? Were there criteria you didn't use? Should they be eliminated? Were there other factors that entered into your evaluation? If so, what were they? Should they be added to the criteria? Are we getting the priorities right for spending this money?
- o How should CEDO's applications be handled? Should the Mayor be able to set aside a "CEDO allocation" up front? Should that amount be taken out of the Advisory Board review process? Should the Advisory Board review CEDO applications at all? Should they continue to be judged against other applications?
- o Should we fund neighborhood grants out of CDBG? If so, should they compete against other applications? If they don't directly compete against other applications, how should they be judged when we decide how to allocate CDBG resources, and who would decide how much to give them?

- o Should predictability of decision-making be important? Should applicants know that they will continue to receive around the same amount of funding each year? Do we reach a good balance between continuing to fund many applicants while allowing room for new applicants? Is it good that new eyes review applications each year?
- o Should there be changes made to the application form?
- o Would you be interested in participating in a focus group this summer, one that included past Board members as well, to look at these questions again once we know what future CDBG funding looks like?

The Board reviewed what worked well about this meeting and what could be changed for the better. Things that worked well were overall, the structure; the flexibility of the group and its willingness to diverge from the established process; facilitator and staff; the availability of subject matter expertise in room; and the food. Things that could be improved were more clarity about what's happening when the group does diverge from the established process; posting a description of the process up front with the ground rules; having an opportunity to step back from the details and take a look at the big picture to be sure the priorities are right; and having a map of the Development projects.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m.